

Implementation of E-learning Platforms to Learn English among Tertiary ESL Learners with COVID-19 Outbreak: Benefits and Issues

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The purpose of this research is to examine the potential benefits gained and issues encountered by tertiary ESL learners with the implementation of E-learning platforms to continue with their academics during the COVID-19 outbreak. Physical distancing has been implemented in all institutes, including universities, in accordance with the government's Covid-19 safety regulations, and all physical academic curriculums have been halted. As a result, higher education institutions have implemented e-learning platforms as the best alternative for resuming the disrupted academics. Fifty undergraduates from the Faculty of Social Sciences who are currently studying English for Social Sciences as a compulsory subject were selected as the research participants. Initially, a pilot survey was conducted to test the research tool, the questionnaire. A two-sectioned questionnaire with a Likert scale was then designed and distributed among the participants. The collected responses were then analyzed, and the recommendations were suggested. The findings prove the benefits and issues of using E-learning platforms to learn English among ESL undergraduates. Although students have mostly agreed that online learning platforms have a high range of accessibility regardless of the time and place, the findings highlight that some undergraduates still face several transformational issues. According to the analyzed data, E-learning leaves kinesthetic and reading/writing learners overlooked. Undergraduates have been hampered by technical difficulties and internet quota expenses. Learning satisfaction was found to be low for undergraduates with the limitations of e-learning. The study reveals that it was unfavorable for undergraduates when peer support and interactions were absent. A key limitation in this research was that lack of prior research studies on the topic. Although the findings question the efficacy of using online platforms, it can be suggested that inclusive, interactive pedagogical practices and equity of opportunities are required for implementing the productive delivery of academic programs via e-learning platforms.

Keywords: E-learning platforms, Benefits and issues, Tertiary ESL learners, COVID-19 outbreak